



**The Industrial School for Crippled
and Deformed Children**

241 ST. BOTOLPH STREET, BOSTON, MASS.

“He who relieves the sufferings of a crippled child, and brings happiness and brightness into a sad young life, does more to benefit mankind and afford complete satisfaction to himself than any other act he may perform.”

Compiled by the Editor of “The Linkus,”
the Alumni paper, 1923.



The Building at 38 Chambers Street
Where the first session of the School was held

In Retrospect

IT may be of interest to many of our later graduates and several of the teachers who recently became connected with the School to know something of its beginning and progress.

A word of the schools in Europe, which originally suggested the establishment of our School (the pioneer of its kind in this country), may be noteworthy.

Italy seems to lead the other nations in the education of her crippled children, having many large, endowed institutions. There is a splendid one at Milan which presents a standard of excellence difficult to surpass. Others are established in Turin, Bologna, and Rome, and also in many of the smaller cities. Scandinavia comes next, having reached in manual training a greater degree of efficiency than have the schools in Italy. Finland and Denmark follow closely the Scandinavian system, while England, France, and Germany are deficient in this respect.

That the establishment of such a school was necessary here in Boston was keenly felt by a number of doctors

whose work at the various hospitals impressed upon them the fact that many children were growing up in ignorance because, by reason of physical disability, they were unable to attend the public schools.

With the knowledge of the growing need of such an institution, and the experience of other nations to guide them, Dr. Edward H. Bradford and Dr. Augustus Thorndike conceived the project of starting a similar school in Boston. — Assisted by several high-minded, philanthropic men and women and Mr. Augustus Hemenway as the first President, the School was inaugurated.

On October 4, 1894, our School began in two rooms of St. Andrew's Parish House, 38 Chambers Street (the building now occupied by the Frances E. Willard Settlement), with eight pupils under the watchful care of the devoted teacher, Miss Mary M. Perry. The children were brought to and from the School in a coach furnished by the Armstrong Transfer Company.

At the beginning of the second year of its existence, the School hired and occupied a small dwelling at 6 Turner Street (now Bickerstaff Street) in the Back Bay section. Twenty-six pupils

in two schoolrooms soon crowded the small house to its limits, and amply proved the necessity of more commodious quarters, which were found at 424 Newbury Street.

About this time, Mr. Francis J. Cotting became connected with the School as a member of the Auxiliary Board of Managers. To Mr. Cotting's untiring devotion as a member of the Board of Trustees, as an active member of the various committees, and as President of the Corporation for fifteen years, the School largely owes its development. In Mr. Cotting's death, on March 9, 1914, the School suffered an incalculable loss; the Alumni lost a true friend.

The members of the Alumni can find no greater stimulus for their efforts than the achievement of one who, despite a paralytic affliction which confined him to a wheel-chair, was so successful in the work of helping those similarly afflicted. By overcoming obstacles far greater than those confronting most of our members, he made his life one of unusual usefulness — a life which should create within each member of the Alumni a determination "Not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

At the opening of the School session on October 8, 1896, the new house was found more comfortable and convenient. The pupils were divided into two departments, grammar and primary, with three classes in each department. Miss Perry was in charge of the grammar grades on the second floor, while Miss Rogers taught the primary classes on the first floor.

Clay modelling was introduced into the School at this time, the two lower grammar grades having instruction in the work.

Sloyd was also a new feature. The first class was formed of very young boys, ranging in age from five to ten years, who worked earnestly and happily, and whose results repaid their efforts.

Six of the older girls formed classes in dressmaking and millinery. The former class soon proved invaluable to the girls, enabling them to make and care for their own clothing. In the millinery class, the covering of buckram frames with gaily-colored canton flannel, supposedly velvet worth five dollars a yard, was a source of pride and satisfaction unequalled by the creators of Parisian models.

Classes in knitting and plain sewing were taught by volunteer teachers. Interest and happiness rewarded the faithful devotion of the ladies who gave their time to these classes.

The first printing class was held on December 3, 1896. Gifts of six cases, with type, a hand and foot press equipped the department. Pupils from the grammar grades, both boys and girls, with three boys from outside, formed the classes, and did much of the School printing.

Holidays were made, by the kindness of friends, to stand out as "red-letter" days, and for all the pupils partial or entire summer outings were provided: for some, a summer at Children's Island; for others, through the kind invitation of Mrs. E. C. Swift, two weeks at her summer home at Lancaster.

In 1898, because of the increased number of children to be cared for, an extra carriage had to be provided, making three carriages and the coach necessary to convey the children to and from the School.

The first reunion was held in March, 1899, when twelve former pupils, those who had attended the School at least

one year, were invited to meet the teachers. Of these twelve, eight responded.

In 1900 the sewing course became systematized under a paid instructor, Miss West (Mrs. Weston), and made rapid progress.

Cane-seating classes, taught by Miss Jellison (Mrs. Gerloff), were also introduced and were attended with great interest, much dexterity being gained during the year.

A class in basket-making was started in January of the following year (1901). Its progress was excellent, and the lessons afforded great pleasure to the pupils. Many of our graduates have made baskets in their leisure time ; several have earned considerable sums from the sale of these articles ; while others have given lessons in basket-making. This shows that the manual training at the School, if not used as a means of livelihood, gives the pupils profitable employment for their leisure.

In June, 1901, the first class to finish the course of study was graduated. The class contained but five pupils. Of these five, one remained at home, one learned piano tuning, two returned to the School, one for sewing,

the other for printing. The fifth member of the class, Marion E. Lyons, took the last year (then the ninth grade) in the public grammar school, subsequently entering high school, and graduating from the Girls' High School, in June, 1905, the first graduate of our School to receive a diploma from the public high school.

In 1903, paper folding for the youngest children was begun. This training helps the little ones to acquire accuracy in measuring and cutting materials and also a methodical and careful way of working. This acquirement paves the way for more advanced manual work.

At one time or another, our members may have heard reference to the Industrial Classes. It may be well to note here the distinction which existed between the manual training classes made up of the grade pupils, who received such instructions in connection with their prescribed course, and the Industrial Classes composed of persons who came to the School for trade work alone, and who filled the orders taken by the School for sewing, cane-seating, basket-making, toy-making, and printing. These latter, as

soon as proficient, were paid for their work. At the present time the printing department is the only department having paid workers.

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In 1903, with the natural growth of the work, the quarters at 424 Newbury Street became cramped, teachers and children alike were hampered by overcrowding. The dining room was taxed to its capacity to seat the children at dinner, and a dining table was also set in the hall. The cane-seating department, overcrowded in the room assigned for its work, utilized the third-floor hall; while the room occupied by the printing department was wholly inadequate for the increasing business.

The new building here on St. Botolph Street, which we all know so well, was ready for occupancy at the beginning of the School term on October 3, 1904. At first only the two schoolrooms on the first floor were used, each room accommodating twenty-five pupils. The primary room was filled by the primary and the first-year grammar classes. The pupils in the grammar schoolroom were divided into four classes.

The industrial curriculum continued the same as in the other building, with

marked improvement in the work, due to increased space and greater facilities.

In the following year, the third schoolroom, on the second floor (Miss Melcher's room), was opened. The primary schoolroom then held the first and second grades; the intermediate room, the third, fourth, and fifth grades; and the grammar room, the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades.

With the hope that it might prove a remunerative occupation for some of the pupils after graduating, a cobbling class was added to the manual training course. Cooking for both boys and girls was also a new introduction.

The fourth schoolroom, on the second floor, was opened in 1910. Each schoolroom then, as now, held two classes, making one hundred grade pupils in attendance.

Thus from year to year, with an enlarged teaching force, there was shown much improvement and development in the educational and industrial classes.

Most of the teachers connected with the School have left a lasting impression upon it. Miss Elizabeth F. Rogers was a faithful, devoted teacher at the School for twenty-five years. Miss Rogers loved her work, and she, in turn, was greatly loved by her pupils.

Mrs. Alfred Wright (Miss Catherine S. Parker) taught at the School for twelve years. During those years a most happy relationship existed between the pupils and their beloved "Miss Parker."

The feasibility of teaching children in the open air was studied by some of the Trustees and others, and in the fall of 1912, through the generous gift of Mrs. Harriet Otis Cruft, the outdoor schoolroom became a reality.

This open-air building was placed in the enlarged playground, and was connected with the main building by a covered way. It is used continuously during the school term, teachers and pupils being provided with warm wraps. Because of its use, not only the debilitated pupils, but all the children have become improved in health.

The horse-drawn vehicles which had been the means of conveying the children to and from the School since its earliest days, were, in 1917, displaced by two motor omnibuses.

Because of the excellent rank attained by our graduates in the various public high schools, the Boston School Committee, in 1917, placed the School on the list of private schools whose

pupils might be admitted to the high schools without an examination. Miss Perry and her assistants were all justly proud of this achievement.

During the war years the School was conducted with little change in the curriculum. Miss Wiggin, the School nurse, and several of the nurses who succeeded her left the School for overseas duty. Miss Wellington, the gymnastic teacher, was connected with one of the Rehabilitation Hospitals in New York.

After giving to the School a devoted service of twenty-five years, as teacher and as Superintendent, Miss Perry resigned from the office of Superintendent, on July 1, 1919. To Miss Perry's efforts and leadership, from the beginning of the School, is due much of the development and success of the Institution. The Alumni members rejoice in the happy association which they still retain with their beloved teacher and friend as Honorary President of the Alumni Association and advisory member of the Executive Board.

Mr. Charles M. Belknap assumed the office of Superintendent in 1919.

Among the new features introduced at this time were bookkeeping for the

eight grade pupils, shorthand, typewriting, and clerical work, with office practice for those who were especially adapted for this training. Several boys and girls are now taking a course in telegraphy, two telegraph machines having been installed in the grammar schoolroom.

A Junior High School course, a two-year training beyond the eight grades, was made possible in 1921. In June of this year (1923) seven pupils completed this course, the first class to graduate from the Junior High School.

Meyer Goldstein, of the Class of 1916, is our first college graduate having received his degree from Boston University Law School last June.

After several months' illness, Mr. Belknap died on March 1, 1923. Under Mr. Belknap's leadership the School enlarged its scope of work in various directions.

A thought from a message which Mr. Belknap gave to the Alumni, in a former issue of THE LINKUS, should be of value to us: — "Let us remember that dollars and cents are not the real measure of success. The standards are, rather, the overcoming of difficulties, conscientiousness in work, the respect of our neighbors, good citizenship."

Mr. Vernon K. Brackett is now School Superintendent. The members of the Alumni Association will be happy to meet Mr. Brackett at their next gathering.

Our Reunion Association now numbers over two hundred members, and is composed of the past and present teachers, the graduates, and all former pupils who are fourteen years of age and have attended the School for at least one year. Twice each year the members of the Association gather at the School for an evening of social enjoyment. The annual reunion is held on the second Friday in May, and for the past two years a whist party has also been held in the late autumn.

Our graduates are ever mindful of the debt of gratitude they owe their alma mater, and they do here gladly pay tribute to the officers, the trustees, the members of the various committees, and the many, many kind friends under whom the work of The Industrial School for Crippled and Deformed Children has been so successfully carried on. All of these friends have given their time and money freely to its advancement with no compensation save that which comes from good deeds willingly performed.

